DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 443 570 PS 028 733

AUTHOR	West, Jerry; Meek, Anne; Hurst, David
TITLE	Children Who Enter Kindergarten Late or Repeat Kindergarten: Their Characteristics and Later School Performance. Stats in Brief.
INSTITUTION	National Center for Education Statistics (ED), Washington, DC.; Education Statistics Services Inst., Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	NCES-2000-039
PUB DATE	2000-06-00
NOTE	6p.; For a related document on children who enter kindergarten late or repeat kindergarten, see ED 414 076.
AVAILABLE FROM	ED Pubs, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398; Tel: 202-502-7393; e-mail: Edith_McArthur@ed.gov. For full text: http://www.nces.ed.gov.
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Grade Repetition; Individual Differences; *Kindergarten; *Kindergarten Children; *Performance Factors; Primary Education; *School Entrance Age; School Readiness; Student Characteristics; Student Needs
IDENTIFIERS	*Academic Redshirting

ABSTRACT

Raising the age of eligibility to enter kindergarten has not eliminated variations in children's readiness for school, and parents and teachers have used delayed entry and retention as strategies to accommodate these variations. Information from the 1993 and 1995 National Household Education Survey is used to describe the numbers and characteristics of children who experienced delayed kindergarten entry or kindergarten retention, as well as their subsequent performance and adjustment in school. The 1993 and 1995 surveys indicate that 9 percent of all first- and second-graders had been held out of kindergarten, and that boys experienced delay more often than girls. In 1995, white, non-Hispanic children were twice as likely as black, non-Hispanic children to have entered kindergarten late. Overall prevalence of kindergarten retention was similar for 1993 and 1995, affecting 6 and 5 percent, respectively. In terms of school performance and adjustment, in 1993, parents of children who had experienced delayed entry received less negative feedback from teachers on two of five indicators; in 1995, parents were less likely to report school performance problems on one of four indicators. Children who had been required to spend 2 years in kindergarten performed significantly worse than their first- and second-grade classmates on all 5 of the 1993 indicators and on 2 of the 4 indicators in 1995. Multivariate analysis of delayed entry, retention, and school performance indicated that when demographic, socioeconomic, and developmental factors were taken into account, the differences in school performance between delayed-entry students and other students was small but significant in 1993, but the differences were essentially eliminated in the 1995 data. The same was true for differences between students who had been retained and other students. (HTH)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 443 570

Children Who Enter Kindergarten Late or Repeat Kindergarten: Their Characteristics and Later School Performance. Stats in Brief.

June 2000

National Center for Education Statistics
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PS 028 433

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Stats in Brief

June 2000

Children Who Enter Kindergarten Late or Repeat Kindergarten: Their Characteristics and Later School Performance

Delay their start? Let them try, and maybe repeat kindergarten? These are questions parents and teachers may ask in trying to match children's readiness levels with the demands of schooling. In recent years, schools have changed the age of eligibility for entry into kindergarten. Once it was standard practice to require kindergartners entering in September to have turned five by the following December or January; now it has become increasingly common for schools to require that children have turned five by September or October. But raising the age of eligibility has not eliminated variations in children's readiness for school, and parents and teachers have used delayed entry and retention as strategies to accommodate these variations.

This Stats in Brief uses information from the 1993 and 1995 National Household Education Survey (NHES) to describe the numbers and characteristics of children who experienced delayed kindergarten entry or kindergarten retention, as well as their subsequent performance and adjustment in school. As defined in the NHES, children who experienced delayed entry into kindergarten are those whose parents enrolled them in kindergarten after the eligible age to start school according to the guidelines of their school district. Children who were retained in kindergarten are those who attended two or more years of kindergarten before entering first grade.

Numbers and characteristics of delayed-entry and retained children

Children with delayed entry into kindergarten. In both the 1993 and 1995 NHES survey, parents reported that 9 percent of all first- and second-graders had been held out of kindergarten (table 1). The 1993 and 1995 survey found that boys experienced delayed entry more often than girls—10 versus 7 percent in 1993, and 11 versus 6 percent in 1995. Children born in the latter half of the year, and thus relatively young at the time they were eligible to enter kindergarten, were also more likely to have been held out of kindergarten. In 1995, white, non-Hispanic children were twice as likely as black, non-Hispanic children to have entered kindergarten late. In 1993, but not in 1995, pupils who had been diagnosed as being developmentally delayed[1] were twice as likely as other pupils to have been held out of kindergarten.

Table 1.—Percentage of first- and second-graders who experienced delayed entry into kindergarten and who repeated kindergarten, by child characteristics: 1993 and 1995

	1993		1995	
Characteristics	Delayed entry into kindergarten	Repeated kindergarten	Delayed entry into kindergarten	Repeated kindergarten
Total	9	6	9	5
Child's sex				
Male	10	7	11	6
Female	7	5	6	4
Time of year child born				
1st quarter (Jan–Mar)	6	4	5	4
2nd quarter (Apr–Jun)	5	7	6	4
3rd quarter (Jul–Sep)	11	6	11	5
4th quarter (Oct–Dec)	13	6	13	6
Child's race/ethnicity				
White, non-Hispanic	9	5	10	4
Black, non-Hispanic	6	8	5	7
Hispanic	10	5	9	5
Other races	5	7	9	6
Doctor has said child developmentally delayed				
Yes	18	18	11	16
No	8	5	9	4

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, spring 1993 and 1995, as published in *The Elementary School Performance and Adjustment of Children Who Enter Kindergarten Late or Repeat Kindergarten: Findings from National Surveys* (NCES 98-097).

Children retained in kindergarten. The overall prevalence of kindergarten retention was similar in the 1993 and 1995 NHES surveys, affecting 6 percent of pupils in 1993 and 5 percent in 1995 (table 1). As with delayed kindergarten entry, boys were retained in kindergarten more often than girls. In both 1993 and 1995, children who had a diagnosed delay in growth or development were several times more likely

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

to be retained in kindergarten. In 1995, for example, 16 percent of the developmentally delayed children were retained, compared to 4 percent of other children.

School performance and adjustment of delayed-entry and retained children

Children with delayed entry into kindergarten. In 1993, parents of children who had experienced delayed entry into kindergarten received less negative feedback from teachers on two of five indicators, while in 1995, parents of children whose entry was delayed were less likely to report school performance problems on one of four indicators (table 2). In 1993, for example, 17 percent of delayed entry children were reported to be *not learning up to their capabilities*, compared to 24 percent of those who entered kindergarten at the prescribed time. Also, 25 percent of delayed entry children were said to have *problems concentrating in class*, compared to 30 percent of those who entered kindergarten as soon as they were age-eligible. However, the timing of kindergarten entry was not related to the other indicators. In 1995, children whose entry into kindergarten had been delayed were half as likely as those entering when age-eligible to have repeated first or second grade. On the other indicators, however, those who were held out of kindergarten performed as well as those who started kindergarten when eligible.

Children retained in kindergarten. Children who had been required to spend two years in kindergarten performed significantly worse than their first- and second-grade classmates on all five of the 1993 indicators, and on two of the four 1995 indicators (table 2). In 1993, 40 percent of the retained pupils were said to have *problems concentrating*; more than a third, to be *not learning up to their capabilities*; and 29 percent, to be *acting up or disrupting the class*. All of these proportions were 40 to 50 percent higher than those for children who had not been retained in kindergarten. While less than a fifth of the retained pupils were said to have *trouble taking turns or sharing with others*, this proportion was twice as high as that for non-retained pupils. In 1995, more of the retained pupils had schoolwork that ranked around the middle or in the lower half of the class. Nearly 30 percent of retained children had their parents contacted by the teacher or school in the last year because of a schoolwork problem; this percentage was about 40 percent higher than that for non-retained pupils. However, the proportion of those whose parents were contacted because of a behavior problem or who had to repeat first or second grade was comparable among children who had been retained and other children.

Delayed entry, kindergarten retention, and school performance: Multivariate analysis

The previous section examined some of the associations between delayed kindergarten entry or kindergarten retention and school performance in the first and second grades. To what extent are these observed associations attributable to the demographic and socioeconomic factors with which delayed entry and retention are correlated? This question can be addressed with multivariate analyses that show the association of delayed kindergarten entry and kindergarten retention with early elementary school performance, while at the same time controlling for the child- and family-re-

Table 2.—Percentage of first- and second-graders with school performance problems, by experience with delayed kindergarten entry and kindergarten retention: 1993 and 1995

School performance problems	Delayed entry into kindergarten		Repeated kindergarte	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
1993				
Since the beginning of this school year, a teacher has said or written that child...				
Has not been learning up to capabilities	17	24	34	23
Does not concentrate or pay attention for long	25	30	40	29
Has been acting up or disrupting class	21	21	29	20
Has been very restless, fidgets	17	19	27	18
Has been having trouble taking turns or sharing with others	10	9	18	9
Child received negative feedback on at least one item above	42	49	65	48
1995				
Compared to others in class, child's schoolwork is around the middle or below	34	33	45	32
Teacher/school said child having behavior problems	18	19	26	19
Teacher/school said child having schoolwork problems	21	21	29	20
Repeated 1st or 2nd grade	2	4	5	4
Any of four problems above	45	47	60	47

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, spring 1993 and 1995, as published in *The Elementary School Performance and Adjustment of Children Who Enter Kindergarten Late or Repeat Kindergarten: Findings from National Surveys* (NCES 98-097).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

lated factors that may also be associated with children's experiences with kindergarten entry and retention.

In 1993, after controlling for gender, time of birth, race-ethnicity, developmental delay, birth weight, parents' education level, household poverty status, number and type of parents with whom the child was living, language spoken in the home, and whether the child attended a center-based preschool program, first- and second-graders who had been held out of kindergarten until they were older were less likely than other children to elicit negative feedback from teachers. In contrast, the 1995 data indicated that delayed entry into kindergarten was not related to school performance problems in the first and second grades.

In 1993, kindergarten retention also showed a relationship with teacher feedback. First- and second-graders who were retained in kindergarten were more likely to get negative feedback from teachers. In contrast, an association between kindergarten repetition and negative teacher feedback was not evident in 1995.

In summary, when demographic, socioeconomic, and developmental factors were taken into account, the differences in school performance between delayed-entry students and other students were small, but significant in the 1993 survey data. In the 1995 survey data, however, controlling for these background factors essentially eliminated the differences between students who were held out and other first- and second-graders. The same was true of the performance differences between the students who had been retained and other students. NCES has begun a new longitudinal study of kindergartners that will allow more detailed investigation of any beneficial or harmful effects that delayed kindergarten entry or kindergarten retention may have on student performance. The initial findings from this study are reported in *America's Kindergartners* (West et al. 2000).

[1] Developmental delay is a condition in which children have fallen behind in physical, cognitive, motor, or speech development compared to what is typical for their age.

References

Zill, N., Loomis, L., and West, J. 1997. *The Elementary School Performance and Adjustment of Children Who Enter Kindergarten Late or Repeat Kindergarten: Findings from National Surveys* (NCES 98-097). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

West, J., Denton, K., and Germino-Hausken, E. 2000. *America's Kindergartners* (NCES 2000-070). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The **Stats in Brief** series presents information on education topics of current interest. All estimates shown are based on samples and are subject to sampling variability. All differences are statistically significant at the .05 level. In the design, conduct, and data processing of NCES surveys, efforts are made to minimize the effects of nonsampling errors, such as item nonresponse, measurement error, data processing error, or other systematic error.

This **Stats in Brief** was prepared by Jerry West of the National Center for Education Statistics, and Anne Meek and David Hurst of the Education Statistics Services Institute. This **Stats in Brief** was desktopped by Carol Rohr of PCCI. For information, contact Jerry West at 202-502-7472 or e-mail nhes@ed.gov. To order additional copies of this **Stats in Brief** call Edith McArthur at 202-502-7393 or e-mail Edith_McArthur@ed.gov. NCES publications are also available on the Internet at http://nces.ed.gov.

Stats in Brief

Children Who Enter Kindergarten Late or Repeat Kindergarten:
Their Characteristics and Later School Performance NCES 2000-039

The Stats in Brief series presents information on education topics of current interest.

National Center for Education Statistics

Education Publications Center (ED Pubs)
U.S. Department of Education
P.O. Box 1398
Jessup, MD 20794-1398

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, $300

Postage and Fees Paid
U.S. Department of Education
Permit No. G-17

First Class